2/20/2000 Draft

Preamble to CALFED Record of Decision

This Record of Decision adopts a programmatic environmental assessment of a preferred alternative. This Decision will make it possible to begin the process of site specific environmental assessments and early implementation of many well defined and badly needed components of the overall plan. However, in some important respects the ROD can only be regarded as the selection of a preferred approach to management of the Delta and its watershed. This approach has yet to be analyzed for viability and then developed and modified over time. Conflicts among objectives have yet to be analyzed and balanced within the availability of limited resources. Uncertainties in science and technology will require flexibility, but substantial commitments should not be based on highly speculative judgements. The preferred alternative commits to a "through-Delta" conveyance of water for export, and to the pursuit of measures to improve water quality, protection of fish, and to closing the gap between water supply and demand, etc. The purpose of this preamble is to commit CALFED to making the analyses that are needed (a) to develop and better define the preferred alternative, and (b) to assure that there is a carefully considered balance among goals that compete for limited resources, and (c) to establish the ground rules and boundaries that will govern the further development of the preferred alternative and its major components to a stage of development and specificity that can then be implemented. These commitments fall roughly into several categories.

General Category

- CALFED commits to compliance with the Mission statement that "Solutions will solve problems in all problem areas. Improvement for some problems will not be made without corresponding improvement for other problems", and CALFED will avoid "redirected impacts". In

this context "problem areas" are now understood to include, for example, both terrestrial and aquatic habitat; both export and area of origin (including the Delta) water supply and quality; land and other resource needs for each of urban, environmental, and agricultural purposes as the population grows; etc.. More adequate water quality, for example, for one purpose or region of use does not substitute for less adequate water quality for another purpose or region of use.

- CALFED pledges that every broad or site specific measure for achieving a CALFED goal will be analyzed technically and impartially before adoption and implementation in order to assure compliance with CALFED's principles, compatibility with other goals, avoidance of third party and cumulative impacts,and for a balanced use of limited natural and financial resources. This will be done and revisions of the plan made by a process covered elsewhere in the ROD.
- In providing for the needs of California's environment and growing population over the life of the plan CALFED will not rely on depletion of natural soil and groundwater resources.

Through-Delta Conveyance

In developing an optimum plan for through-Delta conveyance of water for export the analyses and requirements of the plan will include but not be limited to the following.

- The preferred alternative for through-Delta conveyance and interrelated plans will be fully analyzed and modified as necessary to comply with all of the State's current and future water salinity and dissolved oxygen standards.
- It will also be optimized for compatible and balanced provision for in-Delta habitat and fish protection, in-Delta water quality, export water quality, protection of adequate South Delta water levels,

conveyance of flood flows, seismic risk, etc.. Local expertise will be fully utilized in making this assessment.

- This optimization will include consideration of alternative ways to get Sacramento water to the Central Delta with balanced protection of fishery. The alternatives considered will include real time flow control through the Cross Channel, through Georgianna Slough, through Steamboat Slough, modification of flow patterns by dredging, flow control barriers, behavioral and screened control of fish, etc. Optimization may also include a new channel from the Sacramento River to the Mokelumne channels providing that it is physically limited in capacity to not more than 3000 cfs and can not readily be expanded in capacity.
- If there is any study of an isolated conveyance facility as a backup in the event that an optimized through-Delta system proves inadequate as a balanced method of protecting all interests, then the study must be independent of the optimizing process so that proponents of such a canal can not jeopardize that optimization process.
- The judgement as to whether the through-Delta conveyance system has been optimized, and the judgement as to whether it has been adequately tested must be made after all major features have been in place and results have been monitored through a representative series of hydraulic situations. This assessment must then be made by an open process which includes deliberation by all interests that are directly affected by water management in the Central Valley watershed.

Water Supply

CALFED will promptly forecast a range of probable water supply needs in and from the Central Valley to meet the reasonable future needs for urban,

environmental, and agricultural purposes throughout the life of the CALFED plan and how much is needed to avoid long term overdraft of groundwater.

The environmental need will be based on CALFED's proposed environmental restoration plan. The urban need will be based on urban estimates of need with due regard to predicted population growth. The agricultural need will be considered to be within a range for which the lower end would maintain the average level of consumptive water use that has been available over the past decade for the production of agricultural products. The upper end of the range would maintain this same level of water for consumptive use on a per capita basis over time as the population grows.

CALFED will then assess the extent that this overall need can realistically be expected to be met with existing infrastructure and how much more with (a) realistically achievable improvement in multiple use of existing supplies, (b) realistic improvement in recycling by districts, (c) realistic recycling of streamflows, and (d) realistically achievable desalinization of water otherwise too salty for reuse by methods that include the disposal of salt and that are commensurate with the future cost of water development.

This then will provide a range of probable shortage in water supply over the life of the plan. CALFED will then examine the physical feasibility of developing enough increase in water supply to avoid this shortage. It will examine the most cost effective and the least environmentally damaging ways to provide this increase in supply. It will examine the environmental, social, and other costs if the supply is not provided and the water shortage is shared in a balanced manner among the environmental, urban, and agricultural needs. It will examine the increase in value of water that would be necessary to justify the cost of the needed additional water supply, and the lead time necessary to increase the supply.

After these analyses are available there will be an open process of evaluating the results and determining to what degree the legislature and the electorate wish

to close the gap between supply and demand versus living with the consequences of a future shortage.

Water Quality

Water quality improvement for one region or purpose of use will not be made in a way that would degrade the desirable quality of water for another region or purpose of use. However, the water quality that is desirable differs for different uses. Water trades can, therefore, provide a net benefit, but must be avoided if they cause or exacerbate problems of salt disposal, degrade groundwater quality, or reduce the opportunity for multiple use or reuse of water by parties other than the transferor.

New water development usually provides high quality water, and this can provide an overall water quality improvement which is not adverse to any user or purpose of use. However, manipulation of the new supply to benefit quality for a particular purpose of use may diminish the potential magnitude of the new supply. The use of new supplies will not be made in ways that reduce the potential for narrowing the gap between supply and demand.